

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

PROJECT INFORMATION

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| Project Title: 13BN Aerial Capture Survey - 2007 | | Project No. |
| Region/GMU: Region II / GMU 13BN | HPC: Fredonia | |
| Project Type: Bighorn Sheep Capture Survey | | |
| Project Description: A bighorn sheep capture is proposed for fall of 2007. This survey in bighorn habitat in 13BN will help determine population characteristics, and the feasibility of continuation of bighorn capture management activities. If population characteristics suggest a capture can occur, 25-30 animals will be captured using established protocols, and released in Hell's Half Acre, GMU 18B to augment the existing population of bighorn. Post-release monitoring of the bighorn will occur. | | |
| Wildlife Species to Benefit: Desert Bighorn Sheep | | |
| Possible Funding Partners: ADBSS | | |
| Implementation Schedule: Beginning: October 2007 Completed: November 2007 | | |

PROJECT FUNDING

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| SBG Funds Requested: \$ 10015.00 |
| Cost Share Funds: \$ _____ |
| Total Project Costs: \$ 10015.00 |

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

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| Applicant: Luke F. Thompson Telephone: 435-574-2978 | Address: 3500 S. Lake Mary Road Flagstaff, AZ 86001 |
| AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel) | |
| Coordinated with: Brian Wakeling, Game Branch Tim Holt Regional Game Specialist Region II | |
| Applicant's signature: Luke Thompson | Date: January 5, 2007 |

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:

Game Branch
2221 W. Greenway Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85023
mdisney@azgfd.gov

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

In 2005 an HPC grant was awarded to complete a helicopter survey and capture in 13BN. Both the survey and the capture were completed with great success! 26 bighorn were captured in 2005 and released in Kanab Creek, GMU 13A. The capture was the first of its kind to occur on the Arizona Strip and brought bighorn management in 13BN full circle from when the first transplant occurred in the 1970's.

In 2006, another survey was completed in the unit, and data indicated another capture could be completed in the unit. In November 2006, 28 bighorn were captured and transported to Hell's Half Acre GMU 18B. 13BN survey data in 2006 indicated that the population was still strong, at approximately 200 animals.

The success and value of the capture program in 13BN to management of Bighorn Sheep in AZ cannot be understated. Managers can continue to aggressively manage this population under the Arizona Strip Bighorn Sheep Management Plan as amended 2006, if the population continues to show that it can support captures. Contemporary survey data is extremely important to analyze the impacts of captures from year to year.

In 2007, a capture operation is proposed if population characteristics allow.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. Complete an aerial survey of bighorn habitat in core capture areas in the Virgin River Gorge in 13BN.
2. Determine population characteristics and determine if population can again support a capture operation in Fall/Winter 2007.
3. If population characteristics suggest that the population can support a capture, 25-30 animals will be captured utilizing established AZGFD protocols and the animals will be transported to Hells Half Acre to meet statewide management goals.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

1. Complete 10-12 hours of aerial helicopter survey, in October, to determine population demographics and the feasibility of continuation of bighorn capture management activities in the 13BN bighorn sheep population. Surveys will occur in all known bighorn habitat areas along core capture areas. These areas include, the Virgin River Gorge, including the Beaver Dam and Virgin Mnts. Wilderness areas.
2. In November, if population characteristics allow, a bighorn capture will occur in 13BN. 25-30 animals will be captured in a ratio of 1 ram/4 ewes, utilizing AGFD personnel, and a contract helicopter. This capture will utilize aerial net gunning of bighorn using established protocols. Trained personnel will complete the net gunning. This project will provide opportunity for training of other personnel in this capture technique. The AGFD "Big Game Transplant Procedure" will be followed. A state veterinarian will be consulted with to address any concerns over animal care.
3. The captured animals will be trucked to Hells Half Acre and released according to department policy at predetermined sites.
4. 10 of the captured animals will be fitted with VHF radio collars, and monitored post-release to determine if the release is a success.
5. **The proposed capture is contingent upon a completed survey in 13BN.**

PROJECT LOCATION:

Survey Area: All known bighorn habitat along Virgin River corridor in 13BN

LAND OWNERSHIP AT PROJECT SITE (Please state specifically if PRIVATE PROPERTY and provide landowner's name):

Land ownership at the survey, and capture areas is mostly congressionally designated wilderness managed 100% by the BLM.

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT? N/A

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Plant communities are representative of Mojave Desert Scrub, and higher elevation sagebrush/pinyon – juniper bighorn habitat in northern Arizona. Vegetative species include black brush, mortonia, cliffrose, creosote bush, bursage, etc.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST SHEET

13BN Aerial Capture Survey – 2007

| Costs Category-Equipment, Labor, Administrative, Material | Special Tag Grant Dollars Requested |
|--|--|
| 12 Hours of Helicopter Survey time for 13BN – Includes fuel truck and ferry time | \$10015.00 |
| Totals | \$10015.00 |

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Arizona Strip BLM – Land management agency coordination with AGFD to meet project objectives.

Papillion – Contract helicopter services for survey.

ADBSS – Funding Partner.

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

This project will be monitored by AGFD personnel, including individuals from Game Branch, regional staff, and the wildlife manager of 13B.

Data obtained from this project will be utilized to determine future management objectives for the bighorn population in 13BN, and will also be used as part of the annual hunt recommendation process to aid in determination of permit levels in the units.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

Long-term maintenance of this project will be near zero. Success is contingent upon a successful survey. It is not anticipated that future maintenance of the individual animals captured and released will be needed.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

The project completion report will be completed by Luke Thompson.

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet): N/A

TREE SHEARING (AGRA-AXE, PUSH) PROJECTS (see attached worksheet): N/A